

REPORT

DATE: February 26, 04

TO: Transportation & Communications Committee

FROM: Hasan Ikhata, Director, Planning and Policy
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RE: Final Draft 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (2004 RTP)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S APPROVAL:

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Approve and recommend the adoption of the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan (2004 RTP) by the Regional Council.

SUMMARY:

The TCC approved the release of the Draft 2004 RTP for public review and comments on October 2, 2003. The full draft document was made available to the public for review on October 23, 2003. In addition to mailing out the document to the stakeholders and interested parties, it was posted on SCAG's home page on the internet and additionally, hard copies were placed in key public libraries in the 6-county region during the review period. A public hearing was held at SCAG office on January 15, 04. The hearing was notified in major news papers in the 6-county region. The public comment period was closed on February 9, 2004, providing the public and the stakeholders more than 110 days to comment.

Feed back and comments were received from over 150 agencies, stakeholders, interest groups as well as concerned citizens. The comments touched upon every aspect of the Draft 2004 RTP and they ranged from general support to total opposition to certain elements of the proposed plan. Staff has compiled the comments and prepared responses to every comment that was submitted. The comments and responses will be posted on SCAG's website prior to the March 4, 2004 meeting.

The Draft 2004 RTP has been revised to reflect the changes based on the input received through the public review and comment process, additional direction provided by the policy committees and the task forces since the release of the draft, and inter-agency consultation and communications with the county transportation commissions, subregions, Caltrans, and other stakeholder agencies. A summary of key revisions proposed to the Draft 2004 RTP is provided in this memo. A complete copy of the

revised Draft 2004 RTP is provided as an attachment to this memo. The deletions are indicated in this document as strikeouts and the additions are highlighted in underline.

BACKGROUND:

As the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), SCAG is required to maintain and update a multi-modal regional transportation plan every three years. The last RTP was adopted by the regional council in April of 2001 and certified for transportation conformity by the federal agencies on June 8, 2001. Accordingly, SCAG must ensure that a conforming plan is in place by June 08, 2004 in order to avoid risking federal funding for key transportation projects in our region.

SCAG started the RTP Update process almost immediately after the adoption of the 2001 RTP. The two and half year process culminated into the release of the Draft 2004 RTP for public review and comments in October of 2003. Since the draft was released several things have happened; a) SCAG implemented an extensive outreach program involving over 230 separate events throughout the region reaching over 5,000 individuals, b) SCAG has received comments from over 150 agencies, stakeholders, interest groups and private citizens adding up to over a thousand separate comments, c) some of the task forces, including Highway and Finance, Transportation Demand Management, Aviation, Maglev, Goods Movement Advisory Committee, and Growth Visioning Advisory subcommittee have met several times to resolve specific outstanding issues, d) policy committees, including TCC, EEC and CEHD have provided additional policy directions, and e) additional communication and consultation has occurred between SCAG and the county transportation commissions, subregions, Caltrans and other stakeholder agencies. Inputs from all of these processes have been reflected in the revised Draft 2004 RTP attached with this memo.

As required by the state statute AB 1246, the Regional Transportation Agencies Coalition (RTAC) representing county transportation commissions, SCAG and Caltrans, which serves as the 1246 committee met on February 25, 2004 to approve moving the 2004 RTP to the policy committee for approval.

Preliminary transportation conformity analysis associated with the 2004 RTP has been performed for the region based on the draft emission budgets provided in the latest SIP. Based on this analysis, the 2004 RTP is expected to meet the transportation conformity requirements. However, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has raised a key process concern. EPA must issue adequacy findings of the emission budgets before they can be formally used for transportation conformity analysis. Adequacy findings for the emission budgets for SCAB and Mojave Desert Air Basin (MDAB) are expected to be completed by March of this year and the rest of the air basins within the SCAG region are expected after the April 2004 RC adoption. Staff is working with EPA, air districts, ARB, as well as FHWA/FTA to allow us to move forward with the Plan adoption by RC in April of 2004 with the draft emission budgets with an explicit condition in the

adopting resolution that the plan approval is contingent upon issuance of adequacy findings by EPA for all emission budgets for the region.

The Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for the 2004 RTP has been completed and the public comment period closed on February 9th. The Regional Council is scheduled to approve the Final PEIR, along with the associated Findings, Statement of Overriding Considerations, and Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Program at its April meeting. After approval by the Regional Council, the 2004 RTP will have completed its CEQA requirements.

The following table provide highlights of key revisions proposed in the revised Draft 2004 RTP by Key topics addressed in the plan. The table identifies key topic, summary of comments received, applicable actions by committees and task forces, and a summary descriptions of the proposed revisions in the final Draft 2004 RTP.

Topic	Comments Received	Task Force/Policy Committee Actions	Proposed Revisions to Draft 2004 RTP
Operation Jump Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operation Jump Start should be removed from the plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TCC and RC took an action in Dec. 03 to dissociate Operation Jump Start as a strategy from the 2004 RTP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All reference to Operation Jump Start has been deleted from the 2004 RTP
Growth Visioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disagreement expressed on the forecast by some cities at the city levels Concerns raised relative to implementation and local control issues Some expressed support for the Compass program and need to continue working together Some recommended including financial incentives Some questioned consistency between proposed growth vision and infrastructure improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised growth distributions at the subregional levels will be presented to the CEHD on March 5, 04 for their approval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to continue working together beyond plan adoption emphasized Minor adjustments to distribution to address specific concerns raised by Orange County and others
Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Several comments specific to US-101 and I-710 ranging from support for something to be done to opposing the projects Avoid pre-defining the preferred strategies prior to completion of studies and public process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway and Finance Task Force developed specific recommendations relative to US-101 and I-710 Corridor improvements at their January 21, 04 meeting TCC approved Highway and Finance Task Force recommendation on Feb. 5, 04 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated the TCC recommendations relative to US-101 and I-710 Corridor Improvements Description of corridor improvements have been revised to be more generic calling for capacity enhancements rather than specific improvements.

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Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions raised relative to RTP's commitment to transit, specially local bus services • Some objected to the notion that transit subsidies can be reduced or that transit productivity measure is useful 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edits made to clarify overall financial commitments to transit in the plan • \$57.7 billion in transit O&M (including rehab and replacement) and several major transit projects in Baseline (No Project) and Tier 2 (including Exposition Corridor, Gold Line Extension, East LA and BRT investments) • \$5.5 billion for local bus, \$3.0 billion for Transit Corridors, and \$1.1 billion for Metrolink over and beyond the Baseline and Tier 2
Goods Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous comments expressing opposition to allowing Long Combination Vehicles (LCV) on our roadways • Some opposed to truck ways • Need to address Imperial County Cross boarder traffic • Need to make specific reference to Barstow and Victorville Intermodal facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TCC supported including East-West Corridor Study in the Consensus document 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification about LCV will be provided in the technical appendix • The RTP now stresses that the capacity enhancement projects on goods movement corridors will continue to be studied • Added a section in Chapter 4 to address cross boarder traffic through Imperial County • Referenced specific NAFTA related projects in Imperial

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Aviation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some expressed objections to overall demand projections as well as airport specific distribution • Some expressed skepticism about viability of implementing the decentralized aviation plan • Some questioned the assumption of Maglev system in the airport demand analysis • Bob Hope Airport (Burbank) and March JPA opposed to the proposed demand distribution to their respective airports • Some questioned specific ground access improvements that could potentially enable expansion of LAX 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aviation Task Force (ATF) met on February 18, 04 to consider revising the demand forecasts for Burbank and March Airports. ATF rejected any revisions to the demand numbers and re-affirmed the original forecasts. However, ATF recommended including language in the plan expressing local concerns • Process and methodology for the Airport Ground Access Strategy development was endorsed jointly by Aviation TAC and Planning and Programming TAC On February 12, 04. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stressed that the forecasts were based on an approved process involving ATF and that SCAG will continue to work with the stakeholders to refine the forecast beyond the adoption of the plan. • Airport specific Ground Access Strategy will be included in the technical appendix and referenced in the RTP • Added guiding principles to the Aviation section of Chapter 4

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Maglev	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some expressed support for Maglev and its importance in implementing the aviation plan • Some requested additional details on segments and studies related to Maglev • Some expressed skepticism regarding the viability of Maglev • Imperial County requested consideration of Maglev connecting San Diego and SCAG region via Imperial county in conjunction with a potential commercial airport location in the county 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refined map to provide detailed alignments for each Maglev segment with feasibility studies • Addressed the need to be included in and coordinated with California High Speed Rail planning activities

Topic	Comments Received	Task Force/Policy Committee Actions	Proposed Revisions to Draft 2004 RTP
Transportation Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some commented that the current fiscal climate is not conducive to proposing new taxes • Others called for a united front to protect transportation funding mechanisms (e.g. Prop. 42) • Some expressed doubt about the viability of privately funded mega projects • County transportation commissions noted discrepancies between their forecasts and the RTP • VCTC communicated the possible consideration of a new ½ cent sales tax for Ventura County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Highway and Finance Task Force endorsed moving forward with the current assumptions at their January 21, 04 meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The revised RTP emphasizes and strongly advocates protecting transportation revenue mechanisms • Maglev implementation phasing adjusted to reflect time needed for securing funding and implementing Initial Operating Segment • Provided a better context for selecting lower base revenue forecast, which is a primary reason for discrepancies between the county transportation commissions and SCAG forecasts. • Included language that VCTC is considering a new ½ cent sales tax • Further clarifications provided with regards to private funding component

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Transportation Demand Management (TDM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County commissions expressed concerns relative to inclusion of the TDM goals and the lack of linkage with their funding programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Transportation Demand Management Task Force met on Feb. 25, 04 endorsed moving forward with the goals given the need to be consistent with the existing State Implementation Plan (SIP). The TDM Task Force further directed the staff to continue working together beyond the plan adoption to develop mutually workable and implementable TDM Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTP recognizes the challenges of implementing TDM goals SCAG staff will continue working with the CTC staff to refine the TDM program beyond the adoption of the RTP
Project Listing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some confusion was communicated regarding the project lists. Specifically, questions were raised about projects identified in the Baseline (No Project) and Tier 2 list. Some of the CTCs provided refinements to project completion dates Some requested addition of specific projects in the plan 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised RTP contains highlights of Baseline and Tier 2 projects Added a clarification that project tables in the main document refer only to projects over and beyond the committed projects (Baseline and Tier 2)

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Transportation Conformity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some expressed confusion and skepticism about the transportation conformity and air quality planning process • Some expressed general concerns that the impact of poor air quality on public health is not addressed adequately • Some expressed unfairness of the penalties associated with transportation conformity and need for SCAG to take leadership role in promoting fairness in this process • Federal agencies have raised a process issue that the adoption of RTP prior to adequacy findings by EPA on emission budget for each of the air basins in the SCAG region could pose a problem 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor revisions proposed to the transportation conformity section • Staff is continuing to work with EPA, FHWA/FTA, ARB and the Air Districts to work out a resolution that would allow SCAG to Adopt the RTP in April 04 contingent upon issuance of adequacy findings by EPA on the emission budgets

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact. The budget for this work is already included in the current Overall Work Program (OWP).

Attachment:

Revised Draft 2004 Regional Transportation Plan